Nov. 30, 1897. - 10m. - 10.25 De La Mare.

LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

OF THE

Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Church,

156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY.

Self-Restraint and Blessing.

Many practice self-denial, if not for its own sake, only for the sake of saving, and with little or no reference to giving. Let a Japanese heathen show us a more excellent way. I take the following account from the Missionary Herald (Sept., 1883). In a certain place, and generation by generation, the owner and relatives of a certain house prospered greatly. Year by year, those persons, on the second day of the New Year, assembled and worshipped the god Kannin Daimiyo-jin-san. The meaning of the name in English is "the great, bright god of self-restraint." After engaging in worship, the head of the house opened the Kannin-bako (self-restraint box), and distributed to the needy money enough to enable them to live in comfort for a time. The money in the box was the annual accumulation of his offerings to his God.

Outsiders, learning of the prosperity, worship, and large giving to the needy, which characterized this family, were astonished, and presented themselves to inquire into the matter. The master of the house, in reply, gave the following account of the practice of his household:

"From ancient times, my family has believed in

and worshipped 'the great, bright god of self-restraint.' We have also made a box, and called it 'the self-restraint box,' for the reception of the first-fruits and other percentages, all of which are offered to our god. As to percentages, this is our mode of proceeding: If I would buy a dollar garment I manage by self-restraint and economy to get it for eighty cents, and the remaining twenty cents I drop into 'the self-restraint box,' or, if I would give a five-dollar feast to my friends, I exercise self-restraint and economy, and give it for four, dropping the remaining dollar into the box; or, if I determine to build a house that shall cost one hundred dollars, I exercise self-restraint and economy, and build it for eighty, putting the remaining twenty dollars into the box, as an offering to Kannan Daimiyo-jin-san. In proportion to my annual outlays, the sum of this box is large or small. This year my outlays have been large; hence, by the practice of the virtues named, the amount in 'the self-restraint box' is great. Yet, notwithstanding this, we are living in comfort, peace, and happiness."

Among us, outlays and benefactions are apt to be in inverse, instead of direct, ratio. The general acceptance, by the church, of the Christian principle that every penny is to be used in the way that will best honor God, would cause every channel of benevolence to overflow its banks, and occasion a blessed freshet of salvation throughout the world. "But," says some one, "that principle demands daily self-denial." Undoubtedly; and that fact is the Master's seal set to its truth. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me."—(LUKE 9: 23).

From Our Country, Dr. Josiah Strong.